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The Jewish Quarterly Review.

JULY, 1895.

THE PRE-TALMUDIC HAGGADA.

II.

C.—THE APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM AND ITS KINDRED.

MR. MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES has the merit of having made the theological world for the first time familiar with the "Testament of Abraham," which he published in two versions of the Greek original, with a most valuable critical and literary introduction and notes.¹ But it is quite surprising that the learned editor scarcely considered the probability of the Jewish origin and character of the Apocryphon, which, in spite of the few traces of Christian hands mentioned on page 50f, naturally suggests itself to the Jewish reader. The conception is so entirely Jewish, and so cosmopolitan in form and spirit, that we do not hesitate to accord this Apocryphon a rank equalling the Book of Tobit, not to say the Book of Jonah. The fact that the story is presented as a romance and that its chronology does not at all tally with the Bible, speaks rather in favour of high antiquity and against the supposition that the work is to be attributed to a Christian author of the second century, to which Mr. James inclines.

¹ *Text and Studies, Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, ed. by J. Armitage Robinson. Vol. II., No. 2. *The Testament of Abraham*, by Montague Rhodes James, with Appendix by W. E. Barnes. Cambridge University Press, 1892.

"Abraham the just, the beloved friend of God, the friend of strangers"—thus the story begins—now reached the full measure of years allotted to him—995 years!—when God sent his archangel, Michael, to him to prepare him for the last journey. And here we are forthwith introduced into the hospitable tent Abraham had pitched under the Oak of Mamre with a view to the four "high roads beneath to welcome the rich and the poor, kings and beggars, kinsmen and strangers as guests." This feature—prominent also in the life of Job as pictured in the "*Testament of Job*," and in the Midrash *Aboth d. R. Nathan*, ed. Schechter 33f—occurs throughout the Midrash and Talmud (*Sota* 10, *B. Metzia* 86b, *B. Bathra* 16, *Targ. Jerush.* Gen. xxi. 33, and *Beresh. Rabba*, § 49 and 54, and in Hieronymus IV., p. 583, quoted by Chastel *Stud. Christl. Barmherzigkeit*, note 44). It was the Jewish (Essene) system of propaganda still practised by the great mystic Ishmael ben Elisha in the time of Hadrian (*Aboth d. R. Nathan*, ed. Schechter, § 38, 114) and later on adopted by the Christian monks. It finds its significant illustration in a tradition preserved by Philo ("Monarchy," i. 7, ed. Mangey, ii. 220). Speaking of *proselytes*—גרִים—who "come over" from the *path of darkness* and folly to the path of light and truth—he makes Moses enjoin the people not to let these men who have renounced their country, their kindred and friends, for the sake of joining the true religion, remain destitute altogether of cities, homes, and friendships, but to have *places of refuge* always ready to receive them. Compare with this Philo's Fragments, note to Exod. xxii. 19 (ed. Mangey, ii. 667) and *Targum Jerushalmi* to Deut. xxiii. 16 (and Exodus xl. 6). We arrive here at the very root of proselytism developing from the hospitium offered to the גר—the stranger.

But Abraham—to continue our story—is, like a true Essene, an agriculturist, and Michael, the archangel, finds him in the field superintending the ploughing. Abraham is struck with the sun-like splendour of the warrior in whose

garb the angel appears ; and, like a true nobleman, offers his guest one of his horses from the stable to ride home with him. But the angel persistently refuses, and they walk together, when suddenly the huge tamarisk-tree with its three hundred (and thirty-one=לשס) branches whippers to Abraham, as he passes, the secret that—this seems to be the meaning of the hopelessly corrupt passage—the “ thrice holy God is about to summon him to himself to be among those that love him ” (the just in Paradise ; see *Sabb.* 88b. and *Targum* to Judges v. 31). Isaac had in the meantime informed his mother Sarah—who, by a sort of anachronism, still lives—of the arrival of a guest of super-human appearance, and now hastens, as usual, to bring water to his father to wash the feet of the stranger, when the presentiment that this was to be the last time he would perform the sacred act, made Abraham cry bitterly, whereupon Isaac also wept. The archangel, too, shed tears, and behold, they turned into pearls, which Abraham was quick to take and hide under his cloak. At once the guest-chamber is arranged in a manner to suit the royal visitor, yet, before they sit down at the sumptuous table, the archangel leaves the room and rises in the twinkling of the eye up to heaven to join the praises of the ministering angels assembled before the throne of God at the time of sunset, and then, prostrating himself before God, says : “ I cannot bring the sad message of death to the righteous man whose likeness is not found on earth.” But God tells him to sit down and eat with Abraham, as some spirit would do the eating for him, and then a dream would come upon Isaac, which he, the archangel, should interpret for Abraham, thus to bring him the tidings. Accordingly, the angel sits down to eat, and Abraham offers the benediction, the angel joining. Isaac’s dream during the night disturbs him so much as to cause him to rouse all from sleep, and the cry also reaches Sarah in her room. At once Sarah recognises the angel as one of the three heavenly visitors who had announced the birth of Isaac, and on that occasion

had wrought the miracle of having the calf that had been served as meat come to life again and run back to its mother to take suck from her.¹ But Abraham, on hearing the message of the angel, refuses to follow. In this perplexity the archangel Michael again goes up to heaven for advice, and, on returning, tells Abraham in the name of God that none of the offspring of Adam, neither prophet nor ruler, ever escaped death. The reader certainly misses here an allusion to Enoch, but it appears that he, too, was believed to have migrated from the earth to the heavenly paradise, as Abraham was now expected to do while following the archangel. "The angel of death," says God, "shall not strike thee with his sword nor with disease, for, when once the angel of death is given permission to strike, God himself no longer interferes. (Of. *ביון שנתן רשות למשחית*.) Michael, my captain, is to lead thee hence." Whereupon Abraham asks one favour yet of God (*Mechilta Ba. 11*). He wishes "to be allowed to see the inhabited world and the entire heavenly order of things while yet alive, so as to depart thereafter in peace." The wish is granted. "Whatever he tells thee to do, do for him, for he is my friend," says God, and at his bidding Michael takes the heavenly chariot with the fiery Cherubim surrounded by sixty angels, and rides with Abraham upon a cloud high above the earth, so that with one single glance he can overlook all the doings of men. All the scenes of earthly existence, all the grief and gladness, all the weal and woe of human life, Abraham now surveys in one instant with tender sympathy, rejoicing with the one and sorrowing with the other. But when he sees all the havoc that is done everywhere by

¹ This story, known in Mohammedan folklore, was known also in Essene circles, and is alluded to in the *Zohar*, Chaye Sarah, p. 127b, cf. Yalkut Reubeni Vayera, the calf showing Abraham the road to the cave of Machpelah, where the patriarchs lead their immortal life. Compare also F. Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen*, p. 57-74. Liebrecht, *Gervasius*, p. 47 and 158, the story of *Hatim Tai*, the generous host and his horse, in Liebrecht's *Dunlop*, p. 519; and also the *unbroken bones of Jesus*, John xix. 33-36.

murderous swords and slanderous tongues, and how the peace of households and nations is destroyed by acts of violence and crime of all kind, he is seized with wrath. Beholding robbers ready to commit murder, he exclaims: "O Lord, let wild beasts of the forests come and devour these!" And no sooner was the word spoken than the wild beasts came out of the forest and devoured the murderers. On seeing men and women committing adultery, he cried out: "O Lord, let the earth open her mouth and swallow these up!" and behold, the houses tumbled over the violators of the marriage-vow and buried them under their ruins. And again he sees thieves digging holes through store-houses and carrying off the goods, and he prays: "O Lord, let fire fall from heaven and consume these!" and immediately fire falls upon the thieves and consumes them.

But instantly a voice from heaven stopped them in their ride; God says to the archangel: "Turn back lest Abraham by his wrath destroy all my creatures. *For behold, Abraham did not sin, and therefore has no pity on sinners. Yet I, who am the Maker of the world, do not wish to destroy a single creature of mine, but defer the death of the sinner, until he repent and live. Go, therefore, and show unto Abraham the judgments and retributions behind the Eastern gate of heaven, that he may have compassion on the souls of those sinners whom he killed in his wrath.*"

With these words of incomparable beauty and grandeur, the like of which have never been uttered by any prophet or preacher since the days of Ezekiel, and which lie at the root of the tenderest sayings of the silver-tongued teacher of Nazareth, God sends Abraham with the archangel Michael to view Paradise and Hell.

A grand scene now opens before the gaze of the patriarch. *Two roads, one wide and one narrow, stretch on either side, ending at two gates correspondingly large and small, and a large procession of souls is led by angels along the former, and a few walk along the other; and before the two gates Adam, a man of wondrous figure, sits on a golden throne,*

weeping and tearing his hair in distress at the sight of the multitude going through the wide gate, and again smiling and exulting at the sight of the few entering the narrow gate. "For the one leads to destruction, the other to eternal bliss, and against seven thousand that walk on the road of perdition, there is hardly one soul that walks on the path of righteousness without blemish to find salvation."

The writer, probably himself entranced as he opens his vision, continues, as if relating in the name of Abraham: "While I was still speaking, behold, there were two angels of fiery face and fierce looks, who drove before them ten thousand souls through the wide gate to perdition, while a single soul was led by one angel. Following the many through the gate, we beheld a man of marvellous stature and sun-like appearance, resembling a son of God sitting on a throne of crystal, and before him stood a table of crystal inlaid with chrysolith and beryl"—the reading of the corrupt text is conjectural!—"with a scroll of six cubits' length and ten cubits' width, while two angels held paper and ink and pen in their hands; and on the other side sat one angel of light with a pair of scales in his hand, and one angel of fire of relentless mien, holding a vessel with fire to probe the sinners. The man upon the throne judged the souls that approached, and pronounced their fate, the two angels opposite weighing and testing them, and the two other angels recording the verdict, the one the righteous acts and the other the sins." "This, O holy Abraham," says the heavenly captain Michael, "is the judgment and the retribution." The one that pronounces the judgment is the first saintly martyr, Abel, the son of Adam. "*Man shall be judged by man*" (cp. Genesis ix. 6, and *Targ. Jerush.*), saith God; "therefore the power was given to him until the time when God himself will come and give the final judgment, which is everlasting and unchangeable. For each man having sprung forth from the first created, all are first judged here by his son, and after the second appearance of the great Ruler to"—I adopt here

at once the reading suggested by the context in place of the Christianised version of the text"—*the twelve tribes of Israel*, all breath and all creation will be judged by the great Ruler, the God of all. Then the end hath come, and awful is the verdict, and no one can undo it." And as to the archangel who holds the scales of justice, this is *Dokiel* (accurate weigher=דוקיאל), and the one who holds the probing fire that is *Purael* (the chastiser from *pur*=fire, or=פורענאל, from פורען, punishment). Further the vision does not lead. By the true inspiration of art we are spared the shocking sight of agony and horror in the torture-chambers of hell, and likewise the spectacle of revels in paradisaical life which appeal only to the senses, although we might have expected some such revelations. We are still in touch with the lofty, prophetic spirit, if, instead of all that, we are called to witness the following striking scene: The single soul, under the guidance of the one angel mentioned before, is brought before Abel, the great judge, who now says: "Open for me the scroll here, and give account of the sins of this soul!" whereupon the angels find the number and weight of both the sins and the righteous deeds of the soul to be exactly alike. Forthwith the soul is neither handed over to chastisement nor to salvation, but put into the middle state—בינוני, as is the Talmudical term for the one who is neither צדיק nor רשע. And when inquiring after the reason, Abraham is told by his heavenly guide: "Because the judge here can neither condemn her for her sins nor grant her salvation for her righteous acts, she must remain here until God, the Judge of all, comes at the end of time and decides her fate." "What can be done for that poor soul?" asks Abraham, compassionately. "If she would but possess a single righteous deed above her sins, she would enter salvation," replied the archangel. "Then let us offer a prayer on her behalf, and see whether God will hear us," said Abraham, and fell on his knees, the archangel joining him; and when they rose from their supplication, behold, the soul was no longer in the middle state (the

Purgatory). "She has been saved through thy righteous prayer," said the angel to Abraham. A light-encircled angel had brought her into Paradise, whereupon Abraham exclaimed: "I give praise to the name of God the Most High, and to his mercy, to which there is no bound." Compare the Kaddish : יהא שמייה רבא מכרך לעלם.

But this very act of kindness and of soul-saving grace brought, with all the keener pangs of remorse, the memory of those souls whom his wrath had killed before, back to his mind, and he invoked God amid tears to forgive him his sins and to restore those persons to life again; and God granted him forgiveness, and restored the dead to life, so that those criminals might meet their due punishment there.

It is time to make mention also of the second version of our text, which is both shorter and more recent. There Enoch, "the writer of righteousness, the teacher of heaven and earth," appears at the side of Abel, the judge, as the one who writes down the verdict, and Cherubim hold the scrolls and unroll them before these judges. Then there is first the soul of a woman introduced who had murdered her own daughter, but declared herself to be guiltless, when the scrolls unfolded showed her to have committed adultery with the husband of her daughter and then to have killed her, and many other crimes she had committed. And as they were read, she cried: "Woe to me! I have forgotten all these sins, but they are not forgotten here," and then she is handed over to the torturing demons. We observe here a progress, to be sure, towards the view of the latter Apocalypses; but we fail to find the least trace of Christian ideas, far less of New Testament influences. On the contrary, the Jewish idea of strict justice pervades, until Abraham, the same who pleaded for the living sinners of Sodom, also feels compassion for that one unredeemed soul, and his prayer rescues her. Christ has no place there, neither as a judge in the nether world, as the first Christians took him to be, nor as an atoning high priest who obtains

mercy for the sinner by his vicarious sacrifice. In fact, it is easy to show that the Abraham of our Apocalypse has not a tinge of either Christian or of late Rabbinical colour about him. He represents the *cosmopolitan humanity of the Jews of the Ptolemean period*, just as the Book of Aristeas does, for which, strangely enough, the historiographer Graetz has no place except as a stupid forgery.

But before examining the main tenor and tendency of our Apocalypse, we must follow the patriarch to his blissful end. Abraham's hours are numbered. He manifests the same reluctance to depart this life, as does Moses in the Midrash. He persists in refusing to follow Michael to heaven, and the archangel comes complaining before God, saying: "I dare not touch him, because he is Thy friend, and there is none like him on earth except Job, the marvellous man." This occasional reference to the heathen saint Job is altogether remarkable, as it points to a very old conception *intentionally* refuted in Talmud and Midrash, all of which place Job beneath Abraham (compare the passages referred to above), but maintained with great emphasis in the *Testament of Job*, a work of equal age and equal merit to ours, as will be shown later on, and in the Apocalypse of Paul, the sources of which are decidedly Jewish and pre-Christian. Finally, the angel of death, simply called Θάνατος, is sent to take the soul of Abraham. "Thou whose name is bitterness and ferocity, the brazen-faced, and the evil-eyed—עוֹזֵל and עֵין רַע—cast aside thy terrific aspect and impurity ('stench' of Ahriman in the Avesta), and appear in the garb of an angel of light, exhaling the beauty and perfume of Paradise." Exactly so does Satan appear in the garb of an angel of light to Adam in the Book of Adam, to which Paul refers in 2 Cor. xi. 14. Consequently Abraham goes to meet him and welcome him as guest, taking him to be Michael, the archangel; and the angel of death approaches him bowing, and says: "Peace upon thee, O righteous soul, friend of the Most High, who received holy angels as guests under his hospitable roof!" (cf.

Epistle to the Hebrews xiii. 2, and similar Midrashic expressions passim). But when the patriarch, full of admiration for his guest, asks after his land and destination, the angel of death says: "I am the bitter cup of death," an allusion to the name of *Samael* סם המות. Abraham first hesitates to believe that one so beautiful could be Death, then bids him leave his house; and, when this is of no avail, resorts, like Moses in the similar Moses Apocalypse, after true Essene fashion, to exorcism. By invoking the name of the deathless God he desires him to disclose to him all the secrets of death. He is told that his own virtue and righteousness became a crown of light upon the head of the angel of death, to make him appear like a divine messenger of peace, while to sinners he appears in utmost terror, bitterness, and unbearable odour of impurity. Abraham, desirous to behold Death in his most terrific sight, then arms himself with the *magic power of the holy name* of God, and tells Death to show himself in all his bitterness and cruelty. With seven fiery heads of dragons, and fourteen different aspects, one more ferocious than the other, Death now unmasks himself before him, so that at his very breath seven thousand children die in the neighbourhood, while Abraham swoons away in a fright. At the prayer of Abraham, in which even the angel of death joined, the children were restored again to life, and Abraham praises God on high.

Finally Abraham yielded, promising to give up his soul to the archangel Michael; but asked first for an explanation of the seven dragon heads, and the fourteen aspects of death, which the angel of death gives, while referring to the different modes of death men undergo. In the meantime exhaustion sets in, and, while clasping the hands of Abraham, the angel of death lures away his soul. And instantly Michael comes down from heaven with a multitude of angels to carry the precious soul upward. His body is put in heaven-spun linen, and anointed with paradisaical incense, and after three days buried *under the*

tree of *Mamre*. The soul, however, is amidst hymns and praises to the thrice holy God, carried up by the angels and placed before the throne of God, where Abraham prostrated himself before his Eternal Father, and God the Father says: "Carry my friend Abraham into Paradise to the dwellings of my righteous ones, the abodes of my holy ones, where there is neither labour, nor mourning, nor grief, but peace, and joy, and life without end."

It is very likely that the original work had here a brief description of the bliss of the Paradise, which is altogether wanting in our Apocalypse. The mention of the bosom of Isaac and Jacob at the entrance of Abraham into Paradise is a blunder too gross for the original author. The entire end of the book, which closes with an exhortation to imitate the hospitality of Abraham and the Christian Doxology, seems to betray a Christian hand. Still the whole Requiem idea with the presentation of the soul to God, and the reception of the same in Paradise, must have emanated from the Jewish *Essenes*. For, according to Mone (*Lat. und Griech. Messen*, p. 23f), the formula remained down to the third century: "In the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob our fathers," which goes back to the second pre-Christian century, as is seen from 4 Mac. xiii.; also James, in his notes to our book, p. 129, quotes at least one formula: "In sinibus Abrahæ, Isaac, et Jacob patriarchorum tuorum," which corresponds with אֲבוֹרֵינוּ.

At any rate, the omission of Christ as the lamb, as the first-born son of God, the Word, or as the Judge, excludes a Christian authorship. A still stronger argument against the Christian authorship of our Apocalypse is offered by the manner in which Death is introduced. He is the ancient angel of death as we find him in the Books of Chronicles, with a few Persian and Babylonian traits attached, but this "world-destroyer" is simply a natural power without the malignity of the Ahrimanian Satan, and altogether free from the inherence of sin. He is the personification of physical evil with its

fourteen forms of death and seventy-two forms of disease (cp. *Apoc. of Moses*, or *Adam-book*; and the Avestas' 99,999 diseases of Ahriman), but not of moral evil, as in the Gnostic system of Paul and his followers, or predecessors. He is an agent, not a counterpart of God and of the principle of goodness.

Neither does Adam, as portrayed here, make the impression of being in need of a redeeming Christ to rescue him from the curse of the first sin. Abel, his son, too, is but beginning to claim especial reverence for his martyrdom. "The blood of Abel" is not yet rendered an object of sanctification or sacrament, as it became in the Books of Adam and Enoch, and in circles related to early Christianity. Our Apocalypse is from beginning to end *Jewish*. And in all probability the *Moses Apoc.*, the Midrash on Moses' departure (Jellinek, *Beth Ham.*, I. 115-129; cp. *Sifre Bam.*, 136, and *Deb.*, 338 and 354-57), has drawn material from the one now before us. (See also *Mech. Amalek* II.)

In the Moses Apocalypse the prophet is also shown the whole earth, Paradise and Hell, being lifted up by Metatron (*Mithra*), who often takes the places of the ἀρχιστράτηγος, "the captain of the heavenly host," the archangel Michael, who drives Abraham around the world in the cherubim chariot. The same is told of Enoch (*Book of Enoch*, lxx. 2). Dillmann compares it to Elijah's ascent in 2 Kings ii. 12. Still Elijah only rode up to heaven, but did not view Paradise and Hell, as Enoch and Abraham did, to see the first-created ones, the righteous ones of old. We cannot but think here of the sun-chariot of *Mithra*, which played a prominent part in the mystic practices of the Persians, the Mandæans or Gnostics, and Neoplatonists (S. Windischman, *Zoroastr. Stud.*, 309-312; Reville, *Religion of Rome under the Severi*, Germ. Trans., 89, 144, 161, 181; *Philostratus Apollonius*, III. 15; Rhode, *Griech. Roman.* 180f). We have here the "mystery of the מַעֲשֵׂה מֵרֶכֶב," "the practical use of the divine chariot," about which the oldest Rabbinical traditions, *Hagiga* 13-14, *Shir Hash. Rabba* ad צוֹרֵךְ

בחרוזים, and the *Hekhaloth* in Jellinek's *Beth Hamidrash* II., XVI. ff., p. 64, and the Kabbalists, the יורדי מרכבה, speak so characteristically as of an actual miracle-working power. Cp. מטרמוולין the *Midrash* and *Hekhaloth*. Let us not forget that in the Adam Book (*Apoc. of Moses*) God rides in the *cherub-wagon* when appearing to Adam, and all the mystics are actually described as riding through the air on the celestial ὄχημα. So does Alexander the Great when carried by cherub-like eagles, and the earth beneath appears to him like a ball, and the sea like a pot, as he looks down from above (*Jerush. Aboda Zara*, III. 1). And now we learn from the cuneiform documents that this heavenly ride upon the eagle to look down upon earth and heaven from immeasurable heights, and then to reach Hades—in other words, the flight upon the cherub up to heaven and down to hell—goes back to the giant *Etan*, of hoary Babylonian antiquity (see Harper in *Delitzsch and Haupt's Beitr.* II. 2, pp. 391 ff.). We need not be surprised, then, to find the ride down to Hades by Seth, or Sithil, the son of Adam, in the Mandæan lore. Ancient mythology becomes mysticism to a latter age. This is the key to the מעשה מרכבה, and the Essenes were the keepers of this lore—these נכרתור. Strange that when addressing his disciples on the Mount of Olives, through the opened heavens, invoking the Holy Spirit upon them, Christ also uses the word הנכרתור (this is the *Anetharath*) in the Bartholomean Apocalypse given by Tischendorf, *Apocalypsis Apocrypha*, p. 25.

The Midrash has not only preserved the memory of Abraham's ride above the vault of heaven (cp. also *Ber. Rabb.* 82: אמר רש[ב]ל(קיש) האבות הן הן המרכבה העלה, *Beresch. Rabba*, § 48), but tells us expressly, with especial reference also to Moses *Mechiltha Amalek* 2, and without reference to Moses *Bereschith Rabba* 62, that, in order to have the righteous ones die in peace, God discloses to them previous to their death the secrets of the world to come while they are yet alive. The Midrash

continues mentioning Rabbis who saw Paradise and their own reward there before dying (Cf. Midrash *Shocher Tob*, Psalm xi.; at the close the vision of the dying Essene martyr יוסי בן יועזר). No doubt, then, there existed a Midrash פטירת אברהם, and probably also a פטירת יצחק as well as a פטירת משה, if not in writing, at least as an oral Haggada (cf. Jellinek, *B. Hammidrash*, V. 50 and VI. xxxviii. And this is our Apocalypse. It is the work of an *Essene*. This is shown by its whole angelology and eschatology. And need we further proof that Abraham was endowed with all the virtues of an *Essene*? In his conversation with the angel of death, we have seen him using the holy name of God as a charm. That he ate his meat in priestly purity like an *Essene* (*B. Metzia*, 87a) was pointed out by Baer (*Leben Abr.*, p. 208). That he taught his children from Keturah the use of magic art by the names of the angels of evil, מסר להם שם הטומאה (*Sanhedrin*, 91a) is also an *Essene* trait. And the very fact that the Kabbalistic book ספר יצירה was attributed to Abraham shows that, like Moses, he formed the centre of mystic lore. In fact, Enoch and Abraham are as far back as 140 before the Christian era, praised by Eupolemos as teachers of astrology, who had learned all about the stars from angels, which tradition throws some light upon the age of our Apocalyptic literature (Euseb. *Praep. Evang.*, IX. 17f).

On the other hand we know, from both the New Testament and the Jewish writings (Luke xvi. 13; *Kiddushin* 72b; and 4 Mac. xiii.), that "to sit in the lap of Abraham" means to enjoy the bliss of Paradise. Hence Abraham became a prominent figure there, as soon as Adam, Abel, and Enoch had stepped into the background; that is, when the seal of circumcision had become the pledge of life, and Abraham had to acknowledge the circumcised as his own at the gate (*Beresh. Rabba*, 48; *Shemoth Rabba*, 19; *Erubin*, 19a). For the cosmopolitan view of heaven and hell taken in our Apocalypse was narrowed down to sectarian Judaism in the Talmudical age, which tended, more or less,

to belittle the piety of Job and Enoch, and to behold in Adam the progenitor of a sinful race. This latter view, exhibited already in IV. Esra, grew into large proportions in Pauline Christianity, so that the poison of sin זורמה של דרוש (*Jebamoth*, 103b), worked, in consequence, less mischief in the Jewish dogma regarding the צדיקי אומות העולם than it did in the Church.

Let us now take a glance at the Paradise and Hell of the Talmudists, and see how they compare with our Apocalypse and with those of Peter and Paul. It is Joshua ben Levi, of the third Christian century, who, like Abraham, held previous to his death a conversation with the angel of death, God having given the angel of death the same instructions he had given the angel Michael regarding Abraham: "Do for him whatever he wishes," and who was privileged, like him, to see both *Paradise and Hell*, a description of which is given in the treatise bearing his name (see Jellinek's *Beth Hammidrash*, II. xviii., and 48-53; cf. I. 147-149). Zunz, it is true, finds this treatise to be of a very recent date (*S. Gottesd. Vortr.*, 179); but R. Joshua ben Levi appears throughout the Talmudical and Midrashic literature as the chief recorder of eschatological lore, as will be seen in the following, and his *Paradise* and *Inferno* have their analogies everywhere in the tradition (see *Midr. Kohen*, Jellinek, *Beth Hammidrash*, II. 28-32, in תוספתא בן עזר III. 131-140, 67-76, v. 42-51 and 172f, and elsewhere).

At Gehenna's gate Joshua ben Levi saw (ib. I. 148, cf. *Exodus Rabba*, § 40) persons hung up by their noses, others by their hands some by their tongues, some by their eyelids and feet, women by their breasts. At one place men were devoured by worms that die not: at another, coals of fire burnt up their inner parts. Some ate dust that broke their teeth—they had lived on stolen goods; and others were cast from flames into ice, and back again. Each sin had its own chastising angel, the three deadly sins mentioned being adultery, insulting a fellow-man in public, and abusing

the name of God. All the faces were *black*, and in the very midst of their suffering the Jewish sinners would declare God to be a just Judge, and be rescued after twelve months, while the heathen, failing to do so, would have their punishment renewed every six months. From Friday eve to the close of Sabbath, however, the fires of Gehenna are cooled down, and they themselves find a cooling place between two mountains of snow. Gan Eden he describes (II. 92) as a city with two gates of carbuncle, above which sixty myriads of angels, with faces like the firmament, stand with crowns of gold and precious stones, and with myrtle-wreaths in their hands, to welcome each righteous man as he enters, and lead him to his tent, where wine and honey from the world's beginning are spread before him on costly tables. Four rivers—one of wine, one of honey, one of balsam, and one of oil—flow through the city, where is light eternal and the beauty of continual rejuvenation, the soul going ever anew through the three ages of childhood, manhood, and venerable old age. Trees of all kinds surround the Tree of Life, exhaling wondrous perfume, and *seven* partitions there are for the various classes. About these seven partitions of the city of Paradise we learn (II. 28) that the *first*, made of cedar-wood, harbors the proselytes under the captainship of Obadiah the prophet (probably originally Abedmelech the Ethiopian, *see* JEWISH QUARTERLY, V. 417); the *second*, made of silver, contains the *repentant* sinners, under Manasseh's leadership; the *third*, made of gold, and precious stones, with the Tree of Life in the centre, and the patriarchs, the twelve sons of Jacob, David, and Solomon, and all the rulers of the ages under its shade, Kilab the son of David (*cf.* *B. Bathra*, 17a; *Derech Eretz Zutta* I.) being the leader, while Moses and Aaron perform the function of teachers, all being seated on golden thrones, there singing the praise of God. The *fourth* department, built of olive-wood, is inhabited by the multitude of those sons of Israel whose lives were made as bitter by oppression as is the olive-tree, yet gave

forth pure light. The *fifth* department, built of onyx and jasper, was that in which both Messiahs, the son of David and the son of Joseph, dwelt in company with Elijah. About the sixth and seventh the Midrash Conen is silent, most likely because, according to the Persian system there were originally but three, with the fifth (or fourth) as the inmost part, and only the Babylonian or Mandæan system had *seven*. Compare also Wolf, *Muhammedanische Eschatologie*, pp. 167-197.

Gehenna, according to the same tradition (page 30), also has but *three* large gates, under the rule of *Kipud*, of Neged sagiel (?) and of Samael, but *seven* departments, in the lowest of which Elisha ben Abuyah, the Gnostic, אֵלִישָׁה בֶּן אֲבִיחַי, is placed; in the sixth, the idolater Micah; in the fifth, Ahab; in the fourth, Jeroboam; in the third, Korah; in the second, Absalom; for the first the name is omitted, but all except *Acher* are said to be released.

This seems to prove that the Midrash belongs to the age of Gnosticism. It is, therefore, quite possible that the tradition given as Elijah's communication to *R. Simeon ben Jochai* (Cod. III. 67*ff.*) goes back to that great mystic, from whose son Eliezer, Joshua ben Levi probably derived his lore. Among these נִסְתָּרוֹת we can at least verify a very important one as Simon ben Jochai's teaching, and trace it far back to pre-Christian Essenism, *Sifre Debarim*, 10*a*, 47 (cf. Midrash *Shocheh Tob*, Psalms xii. 6, seven heavens and seven hells). *R. Simeon ben Jochai* teaches that there are *seven* classes of righteous ones, who will see God's majesty in the world to come: first, "his loving ones are like the *sun*; the next class like the *moon*; the third like the *firmament*; the fourth like the *stars*; the fifth like the *lightning*; the sixth like the *lilies*; and the seventh like the golden candlestick with the olive-trees about it." Now, it is remarkable that the Biblical expression, וְאֶהְיֶה לָהֶם כְּנֹחַל הַשֵּׁמֶשׁ (Judges v. 31), is not only in the Talmud constantly—(see *B. Bathra*, 8*b*; *Joma*, 23*a*; Targ. Jerus., and *Sifre* *ibid.*)—applied to the foremost in piety; but the

New Testament writers use it as a well-accepted term. See James i. 12: "The Lord has promised [*the crown of life*] to those *who love him*," and 2 Tim. iv. 8: "The Lord, the righteous judge, shall on that day give the crown of righteousness not only unto me, but unto all *who love his presence*" *πάσι τοῖς ἡγαπηκόσι τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ*. Resh—who, by the bye, in his very instructive work on the *Agrapha*, construes an original Hebrew Gospel upon the false premise that the apostolic quotations are *Christ's sayings*, while, in fact, they are *pre-Christian*, and chiefly *Essene expressions*, to a large extent traceable also through *Talmudic and Hellenistic Judaism*!—fails to see the Biblical allusion (page 253). Likewise must our New Testament exegetes fail to understand the words of the apostle in 1 Cor. xv. 40ff, where Paul, speaking of the *σώματα ἐπουράνια*, in contrast to the *σώματα ἐπίγεια*, says, "Different is the *δόξα* of the *sun* from that of the *moon* and that of the *stars*, for each star differs from the others in *δόξα*. And so is the resurrection of the dead. The generation of Adam is earthly, that of the Messiah heavenly." The apostle evidently alludes to the different classes of the just in Paradise, ranking in degree and in light by their very *faces*, as mentioned by Simon ben Jochai.

How old and constant this tradition was—and this constancy necessitates a class of mystics reaching up to high antiquity!—may also be learned from the following:—In 1 Cor. ii. 9, Paul quotes as sacred writing (*καθὼς γέγραπται*), "Eye hath not seen and ear not heard, nor hath it entered the heart of any man what God hath prepared for those who love him." Resh (*Agrapha*, page 154ff, cf. 281), shows that the words עֵין לֹא רָאָה, Isaiah lxiv. 3, and lxv. 17, could not have been meant by the apostle, but that an Elijah Apocalypse existed, containing the quoted verse, which he claims to be based upon a specific Christ-saying, although the same verse occurs in different forms elsewhere. The fact is that the Isaianic verse, עֵין לֹא רָאָה, occurs regularly in the apocalyptic

description of the bliss of the righteous in Paradise. (See *Berachoth*, 34*b*, sayings of R. Joshua ben Levi and R. Jochanan—both derived their Eschatology from Simon ben Jochai; and the treatise on Gan Eden in Jellinek's *B. Hammidrash*).

But we are in a position to give some information about the origin of the glories of "sun," "moon," and "stars" belonging to the souls in Paradise. The Persian book, *Ardai Viraf* (ed. and transl. by Haugh and West), the contents of which go back to the time of Plato and Pythagoras, also introduces a righteous man taking a glance at heaven and hell; and there heaven and hell are presented according to the original Aryan division into the *three* grades of good or bad *thoughts, words, and actions*, and an uppermost heaven, full of light, for the *good God Ahuramazda* with those souls that are godly, and an undermost and darkest hell for the bad spirit *Ahriman* and his evil associates. The three divisions of heaven bear the characteristic names of stations of the *sun*, of the *moon*, and of the *stars*; and above that of the sun, the highest of these, there is the dwelling-place of Ahuramazda, the seat of the Endless Lights, "the House of Song," mentioned already in the oldest Zoroastrian hymns. There are the same rivers of oil and the wine of the new life (a drink from the stream of forgetfulness, יין המשומר), and the perfume of wondrous power with the miraculous trees and the life-bestowing ox (Bundahish, XIX. 13)=Behemoth, as meat for the righteous, and also the same modes of punishment of the wicked, as described in the Apocalypse of Peter and Paul, and in the Jewish treatises on Gehenna, only far more systematically arranged in the Persian system than in any of these. No one familiar with the Avesta literature, from the reports of Theopompus and Plutarch to the vision of Viraf and all the Pahlavi Texts, as translated by West, can read of the wicked in the Peter Apocalypse, how they are hung up by their tongues, breasts, and heads, etc., without feeling certain that the Persian

conception (if not the Hindoo (Brahmin) one given in Book XIV., of the Pre-Buddhistic Epic Mahabharata) is the original and the Christian is a copy. But between these stand the Jewish Essenes. They certainly wrote the Sibylline books, and of these the second book, verses 260-270, has an indisputable Jewish character. They are the prophetic warning to the idolatrous *heathen*, the pederasts, adulterers, and *usurers*! There is the original "gnashing of the teeth" of those in Gehenna, Sibyll. Book VIII. 350; II. 306, "the fire" and "the worms," and the "wailing" of Matt. xiii. 42 and 50, which expression goes back to Judith xvi. 17. Consequently, when a tradition in the name of R. [Joshua ben] Levi, in *Shir Hashirim Rabba* to v. 15, and *Vayikra Rabb.* § 25, says that as those that live in concubinage with their servants are "hung up by their heads in Gehenna"—exactly as the adulterers are hung up by their heads in the Peter Apocalypse—and the Rabbinical saying is based on Psalm lxviii. 22, while the Midrash and Targ. Jonath. show the entire Psalm applied to the Two Roads of Life and Death Eternal, Heaven and Hell!—we see at once that the Christian Apocalypse offers only *borrowed* views and traditions. In fact, we possess a remarkable vision of an Essene, חסיד, of the time of Simon ben Shetach, a century before the rise of Christianity, according to which the departed Essene brother enjoys, under the shade of the trees of Paradise, the bliss of the streams of life, while the son of a publican nearly suffers the agonies of Tantalus, standing in the midst of water, yet unable to quench his thirst (compare *Visio Pauli*, by Brandes, page 28, and St. Perpetua VII.) and a saintly woman, Miriam, the daughter of Eli (the high priest), is at times hedged in under the reeds [of the Styx river] or hung up by her breasts, because her fasts had often the air of hypocrisy (see *Jerush. Hagiga* II. 1). Compare also the thirteen streams of Balsam which R. Abbahu saw flowing for him to drink from in Paradise

(*Beresh. Rabb.* § 62), and the burning filth in the mouth of the blasphemers (*Gittin* 57a) with the Apocalyptic pictures. Josephus is undoubtedly right when comparing the Paradise and Hell of the Essenes with the Greek Elysium and Hades (*Jewish Wars*, II. viii. 11). But we must not overlook the fact that Plato himself has his description of the Great Judgment in the Nether-world and the two roads leading to Paradise and Hell, the one to the right consisting of seven grades of light—one brighter than the other with a beautiful meadow in the midst, and the other, to the left, of torture chambers, with a "bellowing" beast in the deep, and the "wailing" of the punished ones filling the dark places, derived from the vision of "Er the Pamphylian, the son of Armenios, whose soul came back from the other world and narrated all these things." And this *Er* is identified by Clemens of Alexandria with *Zoroaster*. Compare Plato's *Republic* X., ch. 13 ff., with Clemens Alexandr. *Strom.* V. 14. He is, if not in name, certainly in the main feature identical with Viraf, the Persian saint. Likewise do the names of the judges in Hades, Rhadamanthus and Minos, point to a pre-Hellenic source, the one being Cretan or Semitic, the other the Egyptian god Ra-d'amenthes, "Sun of the Nether-world"; and while the weighing of the souls on the scales before the judgment-seat, found also in the Avesta, has the air of Egyptian thought, the maidens that assist in the judgment, according to the Platonic portraiture, or those that receive the soul at the gate or bridge in the shape of *Virtue* or *Sin* personified, have the original character of Aryan and Teuton Valkyries, and are still found sculptured on the Lykian monuments at Xanthos as soul-carrying *harpies*. In other words, the question of the origin of these *Orphic* conceptions of Hell and Heaven is far more complicated than our theologians or philologists imagine.¹ Egypt and Persia, India and Babylonia must

¹ Including A. Dieterich, whose classic work, *Nekyia*, Leipzig, 1893, is full of interesting facts, but labours under the mistake that the Orphic mysteries can be explained without a study of Babylonia, India, and Ancient Egypt, in short of Semitic origins.

have had an exchange of views regarding these matters ages before the Greeks made the acquaintance of either. The rôle of Judge of the Nether-world ascribed, then, by our Abraham Apocalypse to Adam's son Abel—corresponding with the Jama (Yima) of the Aryans, or with the son of Kayomarth of the Avesta (compare the *Seth* or *Sitil* of the Mandæans)—refers us to the age of Ptolemean syncretism, in which the Jews (Essenes) took a conspicuous part. The probability is that *Enoch* as Judge or Recorder of the last day, like *Hermes* (=Tot), *Anubis* and *Mithra*, belongs to a later stage, and the *Messiah*'s officiating as judge at the resurrection like *Soschiosch* to a still later one.

It would lead too far were we to point out single parallels between the Persian and the Jewish Christian *Inferno* with its Wolf (*Kapod Minochird* 27-50 the same as קפוד, *Beth Hammidrash*, II. 30), its *Lake of Tears* (in *Arda Viraf* and עמק הבכא or Mayan Bochim, *Erubin* 19a; *Beth Hammidrash*, II. 147, I. 132), and its בהמות (cf. *Visio Pauli*, by Brandes, p. 26), the *Leviathan* and *Ur* of the Mandæans upon whose horns the earth rests corresponding with "the *Tartaruchos*" and "Themeluchos" of the Christian Apocalypse and the *Paradise* with its rivers and trees, its crowns of glory, and golden thrones for the just. It is the *Purgatory* or middle state, in which the soul with merits equal to her sins must stay, that our Apocalypse has derived from the Persian system (see *Sacred Books of the East*, West Pahlavi Texts, I. 294), and we find already the schools of *Shammai* and *Hillel*—that is the generation preceding the Christian era—in dispute over these בינונים (see *Tosifia Sanhedrin*, xiii. 3, *Babli Rosh Hashana*, 16b). The *Shammaites* divide men into three classes: the wicked ones, the just and those whose sins and good deeds are even—שקולים—the first being at once sent down to *Gehenna*, the second at once admitted into life eternal, and the third are tested by fire. Here we have the same idea of δοκιμάζειν, which forms so prominent a part in the Epistles of Paul as well as in our Apocalypse,

and is based in our Tosefta on Zachariah xiii. 9, והבאתי את השלישית באש וצרפתים ובחנתיים. Here the proving by fire is emphasised (cf. *Hagiga* 27a). It is probably not too bold to discern the identical names of the proving angels mentioned in our Abraham-Apocalypse in דלקיאל and פרעואל also in the old *Gan Eden* treatise bearing the name of the old Shammaite mystic, R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanos, *B. Hammid.* v. 42-51, in which Abraham and Isaac sit as judges at the gate in place of Adam and Abel in the Abrahamic vision. Against the Shammaites the *Hillelites* maintain that God will have compassion on the middle class and turn the *scale* in favour of mercy. The idea of having the scales of judgment turned toward the side of righteousness in our disposition towards our fellow-man, חיה דן את כל אדם לכף זכות, זכור, which occurs in the saying of Joshua ben Parachia 130 B.C.E., shows how old the conception is. *This is exactly the view taken in our Apocalypse.* It is the cosmopolitan spirit of non-Palestinian or Hellenistic Judaism which prevails in the school of Hillel, and made them declare: טוב לאדם שנברא—"Man with all his shortcomings is not lost," while the Shammaites held the opposite view: טוב לאדם שלא נברא—"It would be better for man in his sinfulness had he not been born" (*Erubin* 13b).

The idea of divine mercy is emphasised in our Apocalypse to such an extent that the Christian Apocalypses of Paul, John, and Esdra could not well adopt it without dealing a blow to the intermediating power of Christ. Therefore, they lay all stress on the justice of suffering, sun, moon, and stars, earth and sea becoming accusers of man's sinfulness before the throne of God, while the apostles and saints appear "more merciful than God the Father of all; until Christ, we presume, releases the imprisoned ones. The main power of Abraham, however, is manifested in his *prayer* for the unfortunate inhabitants of Gehenna. His intercession for the soul he sees held by the angel in the Purgatory is a specimen of what he shall do after having entered Paradise. He will always be the מלאך מליץ. This

is the idea underlying our Apocalypse. And on it the *Kaddish* or *Mass* for the dead rests.

In all the Infernos of the Jews or Christians the cry is heard: "O God, righteous is thy judgment!" (see *Peter Apocalypse*, p. 10; *Paul Apoc.*, pp. 316-18; *Erubin*, 19a; *Taanith*, 11b; *Sifre Haazinn*, 307, צדוק הדין, cf. *Psalms of Solomon*, ii. 16 and viii. 7; 2 Macc. vii. 38, and xii. 41.) In life, justice—מדה כנגד מדה—is not always executed. All the more must the world to come bring about the relentless avenging of wrong, and an exact system of retribution. Still, even the gates of hell are not shut against the power of mercy when the divine justice of the punishment is humbly acknowledged by the sufferers themselves. "When the dwellers of Gehenna chant forth their *Amen* at the time when the holy name of God is praised by the congregation in justification of God's ways, the doors of hell yield, and angels carry them in white robes into Paradise on the last day." This is the teaching of R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanos, the great mystic, the last great authority on Essene lore, in *Elijah Zutta*, ch. xx., and R. Joshua b. Levi, the pupil's pupil of R. Simon b. Jochai, who was the pupil's pupil of R. Eliezer has the following remarkable saying, *Sabbath*, 119b.—כל העונה אמן בכל כרחו קורעין לו גזר דינו כל פותחין לו שערין בן עדן, "Whosoever chants the *Amen* of the *Kaddish* with full force will have his verdict of condemnation repealed and the gates of Paradise opened for him" (cf. *Sanhedrin*, 91b, R. J. b. Levi, כל האומר שירה בעה"ז זוכה, and *וואומרה לעה"ב*; cf. also Midrash *Shocher Tob*, Ps. xxxi. 8, and Ps. lxxxiv. 3). It is undoubtedly due also to the *Sabbath* song of the Essene saints at their sacred banquets that the wicked in hell (see *Pesiktha Rabbathi*, 23) were granted a respite on that day from Friday eve to the close of the Sabbath under songs of Amen and Halleluyah, wherefore *Joshua ben Levi*, in the name of /Bar Kappara, pupil of S. b. J., finds the three Sabbath meals to be a safeguard against Gehenna sufferings (*Sabbath*, 118a). Of course, the

Christian writer of the *Paul Apocalypse* (see Brandes' *Visio Pauli*) had to claim the same respite for the Christian inhabitants of hell on a Sunday instead, as Grand Rabbin Levy in the *Revue des Etudes Juives* suggested. But did not he, as well as the writers of the Christian *Esdra* and of the *Peter Apocalypse*, betray his dependence on Jewish sources in many other ways?

The Acheron, or Acherusian Lake, mentioned as the great river of Hades in Greek mythology, most probably of Semitic origin, found also in the *Sibyll. B. I.*, 302, II., 341, appears in the Syriac version of *Paul Apoc.* as the lake *Εὐχαριστεία*, a rather awkward metamorphosis. The Hebrew words for the forms of hymns, *Th'hillaatha Tushbechatha w^e Nechmatha*, were manifestly no longer understood by the Christian compiler. See Tischendorf, *Apocr. Apoc.* (p. 56). The punishment for disturbance of the devotion during church service is mentioned alike in the Arabian *Moses Apocalypse* (Jellinek, *Beth Hammidrash I. XIX.*), and in the *Paul Apocalypse*, III., 40, a late interpolation). A difficult passage in the newly-discovered *Peter Apocalypse* seems also to find its explanation by recurrence to a Hebrew original. Speaking of the murderers that fall a prey to the evil reptiles of hell, the *Apocalypse* says: "There were set upon them worms like clouds of darkness," v. 10, ἐπέκειντο δὲ αὐτοῖς σκώληκες ὥσπερ νέφελαι σκότους. Harnack confesses his inability to explain this strange simile. As soon, however, as we think of הנפילים, and compare the נפילי תחום, a Leviathan-like monster so huge that God, in order to show him to Moses, must shake the ocean, *Shemoth Rabba*, § 15, we have the matter cleared up. But then even the Petrine *Apocalypse* must have been copied from a Jewish original. And, in fact, no Christian writer would have inflicted so terrible a punishment upon the worshipper of idols as is that of being roasted and burned up like the idol itself. Both he and the Sibylline poet, II., 260-347—whose reference to the Behemoth and Leviathan, v. 292, whose tortures for

the usurers, v. 269, and whose three rivers of Paradise with the emphasis of *equality of all* in the participation of bliss: "no slavery, nor poverty, nor riches, nor tyranny," show him to have been an Essene Jew—had older Jewish descriptions as *models*.¹

The grand topic of the *Divina Comedia*—to sum up our inquiry—occupied the minds of the Jewish Essenes long before the Church took hold of it. The entire view taken of the relation of Judaism to the Church by Zunz and all his followers is, to my mind, utterly false. Before David, the son of Jesse, was placed by the Pauline Apocalyptic in the centre of Paradise as singer of the Hallelujah Psalms, the Essenes had placed their cup of wine into his hands to sing the praise of God at the great banquet of the just (compare *Pauli Apoc.* iii. 30 with *Pesachim* 119*b*). But the New Year's Day, in its character of annual Day of Divine Judgment, turned the mind of the Jew more and more away from prying into the secrets of the hereafter, leaving the subject to the few mystics who maintained the ancient lore, whereas with the Church the question of salvation and doom grew ever of higher moment.

Far, then, from being, as Zunz believed, borrowed from the Church, the Jewish Kaddish, with all the legends connected with it, forms the echo of the last *Amen* of Essene worship, in which the strains of the Orphic song, the Gathas of the Aryan priest and monk, and the Hallelujahs of the ancient Levite, united in praising the Thrice Holy One who dwells unseen above the Cherubim, yet is sought after by all.

K. KOHLER.

¹ I will add here that the name of Atarlimos given in the Arabian Testament of Abraham (p. 138) to Death is אנדרלמליס equal to *ἀνδροληψία*; see Jastrow's *Dictionary*, s.v., which, like Death הורגת רעים וטובים, *Vayikra Rabb.* § 23, and the Demon Bedargon in *Eisenmenger*, II. 436, mentioned p. 57, is פודגרה, equal to Podagra.